

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 09518 110834Z

10

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

/061 W

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R 110627Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5366

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9518

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, MY

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE-SABAH RELATIONS

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 3889 (B) MANILA 8591

(C) KUALA LUMPUR 2866

1. SUBJECT OF SABAH CAME UP INCIDENTALLY DURING RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN MAJOR GENERAL FABIAN VER (PHILIPPINE INTELLIGENCE CHIEF) AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS (JUSMAG OFFICERS). VER NOTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF SABAH-SULU AREA BARTER TRADE IN ZAMBOANGA AND FURTHER MENTIONED RECENT CONTACTS WITH AN UNNAMED "ECOMOMIC ADVISER" TO TUN MUSTAPHA. WHEN VISITORS EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN THE EXTENT OF SABAHAN INVOLVEMENT IN PHILIPPINE INSURGENCY VER SAID IN MATTER-OF FACT TONE THAT TUN MUSTAPHA CLAIMED TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. IN ADDITION, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE REALITY OF ILLEGAL GUN RUNNING IN THE AREA, VER SEEMED TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE MUSTAPHA'S CLAIM OF NON-INVOLVEMENT. VER DID NOT ELABORATE ON WHAT, IF ANY, ELEMENTS IN MALAYSIA HE BELIEVES HAVE BEEN AIDING REBELLION.

2. COMMENT: WHILE WE HESITATE TO OVEREMPHASIZE VER'S REMARKS, IT MAY BE OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE THAT HE SHOULD
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CASUALLY TELL FOREIGN VISITORS ABOUT CONTACT WITH SABAH

GOVERNMENT WHILE AT SAME TIME AVOIDING CHANCE TO BLAME
MUSTAPHA FOR AIDING PHILIPPINE MUSLIM REBELS. (LESS
THAN TWO WEEKS PREVIOUSLY IN COVERSTATION WITH COLUM-
NIST, ROBERT NOVAK, PRESIDENT MARCOS SAID ON THE RECORD
THAT BOTH MUSTAPHA AND CENTRAL GOM HAVE SUPPORTED REBEL-
LION - SEE WIRELESS FILE OF JULY 8.) WE ASSUME THAT SABAH
CONTACT WITH VER IS PART OF MUSTAPHA'S BARGAINING
STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS KUALA LUMPUR (REF A, PARA 6) AND THAT
"ECONOMIC ADVISER" MAY HAVE BEEN HASBOLLAH OR SYED
KECHIK. PURNELL

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Message Attributes

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